



## ***Música a la llum* : the Access to Music Archives IAML project adapted to the wind bands of the region of Valencia**

The IAML developed the Access to Music Archives project to gather up information about research libraries and archives and their music documents at collection level, according to international standards, in order to connect the already existing national or regional databases, or to generate new information where it is not yet available.

AMA and other similar projects are conceived for private and public institutions which keep music documents, mainly music scores, under minimum conditions: accessibility, some degree of description and a professional care of the holdings. But what can we do to deal with more than five hundred private collections of scores and other potentially valuable music materials which are kept almost always without any of those conditions, and therefore remain mostly unknown to the music researchers? That is the main question when we talk about the archives of the wind bands of the region of Valencia.

The wind bands, also called wind orchestras or symphonic bands and in Spanish *bandas de música*, are very popular in our country, especially in the Northwest and in Mediterranean regions like Valencia and Andalusia. The origin and success of the wind bands in Spain still waits for a full explanation but they were already strong in the second half of the XIX century and they grew in the XX century despite many difficult circumstances.

Today wind band music is always present in traditional feasts like bullfights and religious processions, but also in sporting mass events. The wind bands perform as well ambitious concert works in theatres and halls, especially composed for competitions and celebrations. Many of our main composers at the end of the XIX century wrote for



wind bands, and many of their followers who came from places where wind bands are popular continue to do so in the XX and XXI centuries.

The wind bands are perhaps the most important music expression in the region of Valencia, and our region is also the one in Spain where these bands have reached a greater development. There are around 550 senior wind bands. Although they have lost presence in the cultural life of the main cities, they remain very strong in medium cities and villages and also on the outskirts of the capital.

Although very few of these bands are professional organizations, depending on the town councils or the army, most of them are *amateur*, organized as private societies. Today these societies include typically a music school, a young and a senior wind band, and sometimes also an orchestra or a choir. The bands may be very different in size and proportions, ranging from around 30 to more than 100 musicians. The absence of solid structures and professional administrative staff in the bands has kept their music files relatively unknown and scarcely studied; moreover, the artistic prestige of the bands has been built frequently from competitions with other bands, and rivalry is one of the reasons why their archives are in some cases closed to outside people.

What kind of music documents and objects can we expect to find in the files of the wind bands? A big array from music manuscripts (copies and autographs) to prints, new but also old and damaged music instruments, collections of pictures, homemade recordings, bulletins and administrative documents concerning the history of the band and the society which supports it.

The music collection may include not just wind band scores but also orchestral and choir scores and even dance music, because in the past some old societies sustained different music groups. From time to time they have also valuable collections of scores which arrived from particulars because the music society was the only cultural institution of the village.



From the point of view of the description, only two or three bands have a catalog accessible on line, usually a simple database or an inventory alien to librarian standards, and just a few have a private computer catalog, developed as an Excel, Access or Filemaker document. Both kind of catalogs include four or five description fields: title, composer, condition (manuscript or print, complete or incomplete), identification number of the score or the container box and genre.

The notebooks with handwritten list of works ordered by title and genre are still common. The genre is always important and the bands have developed a very practical concept of genre, with only four or five categories. One or two of them are devoted always to the festive music that can be played seated or on parade. Then they use to have as well a section of "concert music", with any kind of music suitable to be played on stage.

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My institution is a music agency of our regional government. It was created in 2000 and after the crisis in 2013 it was converted in the music branch of the Valencian Institute of Culture (<http://ivc.gva.es>). We have developed activities in different music fields, between them the wind bands, always in close collaboration with their association, the Federation of Music Societies of the Valencian Community (FSMCV, <https://fsmcv.org/es/>).

Around ten years ago, we both created a working group devoted to study and diffuse the musical and cultural heritage of the wind bands. As far as the societies have hardly described their music collections and related objects, we needed to start from the very beginning. We noticed that most of the bands had immediate and very simple necessities concerning their heritage: they required advice about the value of their archives and a basic guide about how to properly install and preserve them.



We started our campaign by organizing a series of courses about basic archivist procedures. We avoided technical questions and concentrated on the basic setup and preservation. The courses and some personal interviews revealed the existence of an increasing sensibility about the music heritage in the bands, but also alerted us about many endangered collections. The dramatic circumstances during the Civil War of 1936 or periodical and unexpected accidents were frequent reasons of loss. Moreover, old incomplete manuscript scores or ancient damaged instruments are in general useless to these bands and they tend to keep them in inadequate conditions. From time to time we received news about documents that were distributed between different individual members of the band and never went back, or that were seriously damaged due to poor storage, or even that disappeared abandoned by their owners after a change of headquarters. Manuscript scores were also popular for decades to manufacture firecrackers due to the good quality of the paper, so a lot of music disappeared literally with an explosion.

After some years of slow developments, in 2017 we fortunately obtained a sponsorship from a big Spanish bank, Bankia, granted for some years, that allowed us to move forward and undertake a more ambitious project. With its funding we developed a project called “Música a la llum” (Music brought to light, <http://www.musicalallum.es>). The main goal of “Música a la llum” is to offer to music researchers, students and the wind bands themselves a general description of the contents of their archives, with some basic data on the main documents kept there and how to access them.

The plan is to collect in four or five years a basic information on all the wind band societies with significant collections, compatible with further developments after a possible end of the sponsorship. We have a wide network of freelance documentalists and musicologists, distributed over the region and working partially for the project, because our budget is not enough for full-time contracts.



As far as my center is a member of the Spanish branch of IAML and we contributed to the development of the Access to Music Archives project in our country, we observed that AMA was a suitable model for our new project. The AMA record card allows a description level easy to reach after a few hours of field work. An accurate observation may obtain in this way a lot of useful information. Of course one of the goals of the AMA project was to share information at an international level. We know that our "Música a la llum" project includes music and musicians of limited projection and mainly regional interest, but anyway in the next future we want to share our records through broader platforms like the Map of Music Heritage at the Music and Dance Documentation Center of our Ministry of Culture (<http://cdmyd.mcu.es/mapatrimoniomusical/>), which gathers already all the records produced by the Spanish AMA group when it was active, and any other project developed by IAML or RISM in the future. This is the reason we think on "Música a la llum" as a branch of the AMA Spain project.

So we established a master record card, very similar to the AMA one, and implemented it over a free software created to host archival information in web pages, ATOM (Access To Memory), that you probably know, originally designed by the International Council of Archives.

The main difference between "Música a la llum" and other strictly archival projects is that, as much as we are interested in the professional description of the collections, at the same time we also want to help the collective of music societies to be more sensitive towards the protection of their collections and cultural holdings in general, as well as persuade them to change their traditional ideas about privacy. Not all the societies which sustain the wind bands will agree easily at first to collaborate with us. So our full success depends on our persuasive capacities.

At the same time, besides the extensive scope of the project we wanted as well to start an intensive description at item level and digitization of at least one outstanding society. We desired to have soon an example of the possibilities of a full professional



treatment and convince perhaps other institutions, regional and local, to collaborate with the wind bands.

Fortunately we don't needed to wait long for a candidate. In 2017 we were contacted by Música Nova, a society from an industrial medium town in the south of the region, Alcoy, with a strong musical and cultural tradition. The board of the society decided to ask for our collaboration to guarantee a right conservation of its huge heritage (around 14 000 music documents from the XIX and early XX centuries). We signed an agreement with them to catalog and digitize the full historical collection of scores; they in turn guarantee proper conditions to kept the collection, share the catalog through the web of "Música a la llum" and give a copy of the digitized documents to our library and to the municipal archive of Alcoy. I would like to highlight that this is the first time that one of the oldest wind bands offers open and full access to their collections, which include autographs and unpublished works of wind band, orchestra and chamber music of some of our most important composers. Among these musicians we can find José Espí, devoted mainly to opera and concert song. One of his song cycles was, by the way, printed in Leipzig in 1878 for a music publisher from Madrid.

Of course you know well what kind of data an AMA record card will include, as far as it's developed after international archivistic standards. So I will explain a bit more about the complementary information offered in our web page besides the database. We want to get results useful to the music researchers community but also attractive for all the big communities around the wind bands, so we showed interest towards social issues and develop parallel activities, as concerts and recordings, to amplify the impact of the project.

Of course, one of the most characteristic aspects of this music movement around is its big social scope. We are talking about a community of 50 000 musicians. Accordingly, "Música a la llum" wants to share its project with as many associates as possible. Our social side was important to us from the beginning, so we started with a Facebook



page where we provided information on our visits and a series of audiovisual interviews with some veteran protagonists of the wind bands communities.

Our web includes as well an increasing list of bibliography and other sources about the bands from the region of Valencia: discography, electronic publications and audiovisual recordings (usually in Youtube). Information on wind bands and local composers are sometimes difficult to find as it does not appear in the usual academic sources, but in hard to find books published by the societies themselves or the city councils, in feasts yearbooks or in local magazines with a restricted distribution, scarcely described, that we are trying to collect for our library.

As the name for our project announced, little by little our field work is offering results and we are locating some lost music to bring to light. Early this year we find a manuscript of an important wind band composition that scholars considered disappeared. It is a vintage copy of "Una fiesta en el Alcázar", by Salvador Giner (1832-1911), one of the main Valencia and Spain composers from the second half of the XIX century. It was carefully kept by the Primitiva de Albaida society, one of the bands which premiered the work in a competition on 1887, but nobody knew that the work still was in their files. Similarly, some months ago we were approached by the board of the society Artesana of Catarroja, a village close to Valencia, because they recently find in their files a previously forgotten collection of old manuscripts donated to the band probably 60 years ago by the family of the eminent composer and conductor José Manuel Izquierdo (1890-1951), born in Catarroja.

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After less than two years of "Música a la llum" it is too early to draw conclusions, but I would like to finish this presentation with some comments on our achievements and pending tasks.



Until June 2018 our collaborators have visited around 40 music societies and we have upload 32 record cards. The cards are revised, corrected and translated before being published, but the quality of the information collected is not always the best one; it is usual that the informers from the band don't know very much about their own oldest holdings that are the most interesting to us. In those cases we try to find other sources of information, like veteran musicians or conductors. Direct examination of sources is possible but difficult because time limitations.

We have noted almost always a sincere interest to increase the care of archives and other heritage collections. The positive reaction to the news published in our social networks are very inspiring.

Concerning our web page, we know that it is a first version which need improvements, including for example advanced search into the database and a more professional structure.

From the musicological point of view we have "found" some interesting manuscripts of music works in several archives, which can be roughly described as "lost" or "unknown". We at least have put them under the spotlight. Of course we already need to get feedback from the scholar community and learn from similar experiences. In this way, we have organized a congress in December around "Música a la llum" and we expect to get some feedback about it, and this is also the reason we are presenting it today to you. Thank you very much for your attention.